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Election of officers

Letter dated 2 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States at the United Nations for the month of April 2009, I write to draw your attention to the following. It has come to the attention of the Arab Group at the United Nations, Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen, that the Group of Western European and other States have nominated Israel, the occupying Power, for the chairmanship of the forty-third session of the Commission on Population and Development.

As a matter of principle, the Arab Group respects decisions by regional groups on candidatures. At the same time, the Arab Group is deeply concerned that the representative of Israel, as Chair of the Commission on Population and Development, will have a negative impact on the Commission's work and on the Commission's credibility, given this country's demonstrated hindrance of development and grave violations of the rights of the Arab populations in the occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan and the remaining Lebanese occupied territory. The Arab Group thus wishes to clearly state its strong objection to this nomination as we believe it contravenes with the purposes and principles upon which this commission was established.

Israel's appalling record of violations of the rights of the Arab populations under its occupation and its contempt for United Nations resolutions and international law are widely documented in numerous United Nations reports. In *this regard, and in relation* to the work of the Commission on Population and Development, we wish to underscore the following.

One of the primary roles of the Commission on Population and Development is following up the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International

* See E/CN.9/2009/L.2.

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Conference on Population and Development. The Programme of Action states, among other things, that the human person is the central subject of development; that the principles of the right to development is an integral part of fundamental human rights; that sustainable development is a means to ensure human well-being; that everyone has the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health as well as the right to education; that children have the right to protection, health and education; and that all peoples have the right to sustained economic growth. These rights and principles are gravely violated in the Occupied Palestinian Territory because of the systematic and wilful policies of Israel, the occupying Power. These policies have imposed a state of de-development, poverty and hunger on Palestinians, as outlined in countless United Nations documents (including A/63/35, A/63/273, A/63/518, A/63/75 and A/63/74).

Most recently, Israel, the occupying Power, launched a vicious and criminal war against 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza, kept under an illegal and crippling Israeli siege. According to human rights organizations and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Israeli conduct during this war amounts to flagrant war crimes. Even the accounts of Israeli occupation soldiers who perpetrated these crimes corroborate these severe charges. Nominating a country that stands accused of war crimes, which includes wilfully targeting the civilian population, as well as the infrastructure, schools, hospitals, economic institutions and United Nations buildings, would send an unacceptable message to the millions of people who count on this Commission to better their lives and offer their children a brighter future.

As an occupying Power and major violator of international law and United Nations resolutions, including those that relate to population and development, Israel lacks the qualities needed in a chair of a United Nations commission and thus will not be able to perform its duties in the manner and impartiality expected of the country assuming such an important role.

Based on the aforementioned grounds, the Arab Group absolutely disagrees with this nomination. In this regard, we call upon members of the Commission on Population and Development to uphold the purposes and principles that guide the work of the Commission and to carefully consider this nomination.

The Arab Group kindly requests that the present letter be distributed as a document of the Commission on Population and Development, under agenda item 1 of the provisional agenda of the forty-third session of the Commission on Population and Development.

(*Signed*) Mohammed F. **Al-Allaf**